

The Red Button

BY Will Irwin

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SYNOPSIS.

Tommy North, returning to his room in Mrs. Moore's boarding house at 230 a. m., discovers the body of Capt. John Hanks, another roomer, with a knife wound on his breast. Suspicion rests upon a man giving the name of Lawrence Wade, who had been heard quarreling with Hanks. During the excitement a strange woman appears and takes into her own home across the street all of Mrs. Moore's boarders, including Miss Estrilla, an invalid, whose brother was a favorite among the other boarders. Wade is arrested. Mrs. LeGrange, who while buying her trade as a nursemaid, had aided Police Inspector Martin McGee several times, calls at his office to tell what she knows of the crime. While she is there, Constance Hanks, widow of the murdered man, whose existence had been unknown, appears. Mrs. Hanks, says she had left her husband and disclosed the fact that Wade represented her and visited Hanks on the night of the murder in an effort to settle their affairs. She admits Wade was in love with her. Wade is held by the coroner's jury for the death of Hanks. A final scene with Inspector McGee, examines the house where Hanks was killed and finds on the first floor outside Hanks's window a red shoe button, which she conceals. Mrs. LeGrange secretly examines the shoe of her boarders in search of one of the red buttons will fit. She pretends to go into a trance to Miss Estrilla's room and communes with spirits. Rosalie secures from Inspector McGee the services of an Italian detective, to watch for the murderer. Rosalie finds evidence to show that Estrilla's real name is Perez and that they formerly lived in Port of Spain. Rosalie goes into another trance in Miss Estrilla's room and gains the young woman's confidence. In succeeding scenes, Rosalie leads Miss Estrilla to believe she is talking with the spirit of John Hanks, and gets information that leads her to prepare for a supreme test. With Inspector McGee and detectives at her disposal, Rosalie, in a final scene, leads Miss Estrilla to tell, in a supposed conversation with the spirit of Hanks, that her brother had the knife that killed Hanks. Confronted by the officers, Miss Estrilla makes a full confession. She tells how Hanks secured possession of her jewels and fled to New York, and how she and her brother went to New York to Mrs. Moore's house. She says that John, dressed in her clothes, entered Hanks's room and rushed at the intruder, who picked up a knife from the table to threaten Hanks. She declares Hanks, in his rage, was suddenly stricken with apoplexy and fell upon the knife, which pierced his heart.

CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

He sat facing the door; he perceived her first; he rose with an expression of real surprise and pleasure. "Why, Mrs. LeGrange! How did you get here?" he said. But now his eye caught Betsy-Barbara. She, too, had risen, as one who acts at last after long strain of repression. Her color came and went; she was looking at Rosalie and then back at Estrilla.

"Miss Lane," said Rosalie in a quiet, meaningful voice, "will excuse you. Take your coat, dear."

Estrilla opened her mouth as though to protest, made an inarticulate sound, stopped. His eyes were on Rosalie.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"It means first that you had better sit down," she said. "The waiter's looking this way. A man in your position can't afford to make a scene in a public place."

Estrilla sank with an unsteady motion into his chair. At this physical support, he seemed to grip his nerve.

"What do you mean by my position? Why do you come this way—Why?"

"Listen. First of all, I'm your friend. Get that right away! I'm here to help you. An' I'm in a hurry."



"How Did You Get Here?"

So are you. The police have your sister. By tonight they'll be after you."

Estrilla gripped the arms of his chair; the green shade crept back. He moistened his lips once or twice with his tongue.

"Remember!" went on Rosalie under her voice, "no scene. Hold on to yourself. Makin' one now is the last thing you ought to do. Is the bill paid? All right. Now get your hat. Now put on your slippers. Now your gloves an' your stick!" Estrilla obeyed her docilely. "Now come with me into the park—it's safer, because we can watch."

"But my sister—I don't care for myself—I must go to—"

"I'm here," said Rosalie LeGrange. "To do what I can for you an' your sister both. Now come, I tell you—or will you keep on bein' a fool?" At this dash of mental cold water, he rose. Rosalie walked close behind him, ready to support him where he staggered. Outside, a park foot-policeman

walked slowly down the path. Estrilla saw him, started, hesitated.

"Not unless you make a scene!" cried Rosalie, anticipating his thought. "I'm not arresting you—can't you understand that?" She hurried him to a lonely park bench, half hidden in the shrubbery. When she turned to look him full in the face again, his color was normal; he had regained his grip. And he spoke with a touch of his old boyish insolence.

"This is a little melodrama you are staging, Mrs. LeGrange? Am I the hero or the villain?"

"I expected you to be suspicious an' try to bluff this through," said Rosalie in her most matter-of-fact tone, "that's why I stole this note an' brought it here." She had been keeping her hands in her muff. She drew them out, now, and handed him the vital paper.

"I am telling to the police all I know of my part and my brother's part in the death of Capt. John H. Hanks. I have confessed that we followed him to America to get my jewels, and that it was my brother Juan who appeared to have stabbed him."

"MARGARITA PEREZ."

He read it. As he looked up he was still master of himself, but Rosalie could perceive behind his mask a kind of vibration, an inner agitation of all his nerves. But his will still mastered his voice.

"Margarita Perez—who is she?"

"She is your sister. You are Juan Perez—not Estrilla. You are from Port of Spain. You came here to follow Captain Hanks."

"Where did you hear this?" inquired Estrilla, with a pitiful attempt to put sarcasm into his voice.

"I have listened to her confession," replied Rosalie calmly. "She told the police—after she signed that paper—how you went into Captain Hanks's room at night to get your family jewels, how that trick alarm on his strong-box woke him up, an' how you killed him."

But Juan Estrilla had leaped up now as though his nerves would be denied no longer.

"You are here to betray me—I know it now!" he said.

"I suspected this trouble was coming," replied Rosalie LeGrange. "I sent Miss Lane to deliver you here at five o'clock—because it's an out-of-the-way place an' quiet. Sit down."

Estrilla shook as he resumed his seat.

"Does she know?" he asked.

"Not yet," said Rosalie.

"I didn't give her my real reason. I was glad," she pursued, "to hear you burst out in that sincere way when I said you killed Hanks. I put that in for a test; an' you stood it. Now sit there and listen to what else your sister said, an' see if any of that could have been worked out by detectives. She says you didn't kill Hanks, that he died of apoplexy an' fell on the knife you was holdin' against him."

Estrilla turned his great eyes and moistened his lips as though to speak; but he held to his nerve and made no sound.

"She says that you carried out that box of jewels with the cover open, an' that a diamond buckle dropped out as you were passing through the door. An' when she came back in your clothes after you telephoned to her, she picked it up. The jewels are in Caracas. You dropped the box in the river. Could anybody patch that together? Could anybody guess that?"

"Then if he died of apoplexy—if I didn't kill him—why should they arrest me?" asked Estrilla.

"Young man," said Rosalie, "how could you prove it?"

Innocently and directly, Estrilla came out with what amounted to his confession.

"He was always in danger of apoplexy—my sister knew that. And undoubtedly it was a mortal seizure. For his hands were going toward his head, not toward the knife. Even when he fell and died, his hands were still going up, not down. I have seen doctors. I have read about apoplexy in every medical book in the public library. And when I saw him last—there was blood in his nostrils."

Rosalie nodded.

"I saw that, too. My, but coroners' physicians are dense!" she said. "Now I've got to talk hard and straight. You were in the act of burglary. It don't make no difference that you had a right to burgle—no jury would recognize that. The coroner's physician never thought of anything but that stab wound—never thought to look for apoplexy—case seemed too plain. You an' I are the only people who thought about that bloody nose. The body's cremated, an' if it wasn't well, we won't go into that. Why Juan Perez they'd laugh at you. Do you see?"

He was trembling, and now he made a pitiful movement with his hands as though to steady his head.

"So you must get away."

"But my sister—"

"Now hold on to yourself. I've got to talk awful to make you see this thing. She didn't kill him—she couldn't. Anybody could see that. A sick little thing like her hasn't the power in her to drive such a knife into a big man who's standin' on his

feet. No jury would swallow it. She's accessory or somethin'—but you can bet, Mr. Juan Perez, that an American jury ain't goin' to give a verdict against a sick little woman who's an accessory because she's standin' in her English countries, but not here. An' which do you think would be better for your sister—to go to jail until her trial, or to wait by the gate of Sing Sing an' take you away some mornin' all dead an' floppy after you'd had ten thousand volts of electricity switched into your spinal column—"

Estrilla was on his feet now, in a crisis of nerves. His eyes closed and opened to a set stare.

"I thought you'd see it," said Rosalie. "I won't keep you in suspense any longer. You're goin' to get away. An' I've fixed it. Look at this—here, take it!" She pulled another paper from her muff, handed it to Estrilla. It shook in his hands as he read.

"A seaman's paper," he said at length.

"For Antonio Corri, an Italian sailor signed for the schooner Maud. He fell



"That First Gang Plank," She Said.

down a hatch this mornin' an' broke his leg. An' he can't go. You're shipin' an' he's fixed it. The Captain don't know who you are. He only knows that he's got a man who must beat it out of the country—an' he'll do anythin' for me. He lands at Halifax. He'll fix it for you to get to the next place—wherever that may be. I'm going to write him at Halifax advising him about that. An' you're to tell him, so he can tell me, so I can tell your sister, where you've gone. Got any money on you?"

"Only a little."

"Well, the Captain has two hundred dollars of mine—for you. I want you to understand it's a loan with interest at five per cent., to be paid when it's safe. If you need any more, I'll send it to the skipper—same terms. That's agreed?"

"Yes. Why do you—"

"Take all this trouble? Old fool. Now, listen. There's a taxi over there discharging passengers at the Casino. We're goin' to flag it. We're goin' to take it as far as Sixth Avenue, an' we'll travel by elevated the rest of the way, because guards don't remember their passengers an' taxicab drivers sometimes do. We'll get on separate trains an' meet on the dock—Pier 16½ East River. Know how to find that? Well, I'll tell you as we go. Here! Taxi!" And Rosalie waved to the chauffeur.

"Sixth Avenue elevated. Nearest station," she directed.

In the midst of her minute instructions, Estrilla (or Perez) started once to thank her.

"How do you come to do this?" he said. "And how did the police ever—"

Rosalie put her mouth close to his ear.

"Taxis are built funny sometimes," she whispered; "the chauffeur might hear."

He turned on her a caroling look of gratitude. Life was back in his face and motion now. He looked out on the crowded rows of West Side apartment-houses, and dropped for a second into Spanish.

"Saner de Dios!" he said, "how I shall always thank New York!" They were drawing up at the elevated.

"Remember how to get there?" she whispered before she opened the door. "Sure? Go ahead an' take the first train. I'll follow on the next. Walk slow after you get off. I'll walk fast—neither of us wants to loiter on that pier."

If Estrilla hoped that he would hear further clearance of these mysteries at the dock, he was disappointed. As he passed the gate, Rosalie shot from under shadow of a truck. She glanced to right and left. None of the roué abouts was looking or listening.

"That first gangplank," she said. "The Captain's aboard expectin' you. Just say to him, 'The Corri.' He knows the rest. You'll change clothes in his cabin. He'll keep you at work until you sail—at daybreak. Go—don't thank me—go—I'm sure you'll see your sister in a year or two. Go. Now for the first time in her disfigure-



mysteriously gone, he waited for a time at the house. Rosalie made no sign. Presently, Miss Harding and Miss Jones came home to dinner, and afterward Professor Noll. McGee detained them all. Seven o'clock passed; and the other three boarders failed, like the landlady, to appear. They were Mr. North, Mrs. Hanks, and Miss Lane—all involved in the Hanks case. When he noted this suspicious circumstance, he removed Miss Estrilla to a private room in the criminal ward at Bellevue. Booked as Margaret Perez, she attracted no great attention from the reporters; especially since a surgeon, instructed in advance, gave out a hint that she was merely a witness in a counterfeiting case. Then began an all-night search—for Estrilla first, for Rosalie next, and last of all for North and the two women.

Late that night, Inspector McGee, clutching at every possibility, visited Lawrence Wade in his cell at the Tombs and questioned him. The announcement that Mrs. Hanks had disappeared seemed to disturb him more than any device for breaking silence that the police had ever used; but still he maintained his attitude of defiant and somewhat insolent calm. Unshaken, he stood all the questioning; and McGee, aware now of his innocence, had not the heart to crowd him to the wall.

So the night had worn away; and so the morning. And Rosalie LeGrange made no sign. How long—how long? He turned to ring for a detective.

The doorman entered.

"Mrs. LeGrange to see you," he said.

For the first time in his life of brute force, Martin McGee felt his physical powers crumbling and waning within him. He sat down at his desk. Rosalie LeGrange had come. That meant present success and ultimate triumph; for Rosalie LeGrange had never failed him yet. Doubtless she had achieved another of her miracles—possibly Juan Perez alias Estrilla was just behind her.

"Show her in—and I'm engaged—don't disturb me for anything—until I tell you."

He started as she stood for a moment facing him. Dead of eye, dead of expression, dead of life—she looked again all her age. She moved toward him at a pace which showed effort with every step.

"Well," he cried, "well! We've had a chase for you. Gee! I couldn't think what had happened!" His professional concerns rushed into his mind with the departure of his greater anxiety. "Where is he? Did you get him?" he asked.

She ignored the chair which he pushed toward her. And she simply shook her head.

"What!" exclaimed Martin McGee. "What! That comes of letting you try to get him alone. What a damn fool—did he get away from you?"

Rosalie, still looking into his eyes, shook her head again.

The change in Inspector McGee's face expressed his emotion as clearly as though he had spoken in volumes. His skin flushed; his eyes grew hard; his jaw snapped.

"You didn't?"

Again Rosalie shook her head.

"What do you mean—what do you mean?"

"I let him go—I helped him get away," said Rosalie LeGrange.

"Well, by G—!" cried Inspector McGee—"by God, we'll get him and you. Fool me, will you—and I trusted you! If you think you can beat a general alarm—where's that doorman?"—with another thought, his hand went toward the battery of electric bells which could summon armed men at will from the ground. But Rosalie caught his wrist.

"Wait!" she said. "If you ring that bell you shut me up for good. Do you think any little police Third Degree can get anything out of me that I don't want to tell? Your one chance to get the truth is to hear it now. The minute anybody else comes into that door—I close my face. Take you hand away from there. Sit down!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Undesirable.

"Are they desirable tenants?"

"Dear me, no. They're nice people but they've got four children."—Detroit Free Press.

WHEN LIES ARE EXCUSABLE

Instances Given of Times When the Truth is Not Expected or Wanted.

Few people, I fancy, would say, after deliberation, that no lie was ever justified. To be sure, I once heard a serious young man protest that Shakespeare had damned Desdemona by allowing her at her last gasp to exculpate Othello. I have also known people who objected vehemently to the late Mark Twain because he said so many things that were not so. But there are occasions when lies are taken for granted, even by the law.

A man on trial for his life is supposed to tell the truth, but not if it will incriminate him. A wife is not dragged to the witness stand against her will—no one would legitimately expect anything but perjury from her. I do not see much difference between legally permitting a man to say "Not Guilty" when he is guilty, and legally permitting him to lie. Is there any solitary maiden who would not willingly give the midnight marauder to understand that her husband was just

coming down the stairs, armed to the teeth? A man is not supposed, except by an extinct type of Puritan, to "give away" the woman who has made sacrifices for him; and even the extinct type of Puritan would hardly expect you to tell your hostess that her dinner party had been dull. From this heterogeneous group of examples, one may infer that there are lies and lies; and while it is never permissible to lie, it is sometimes quite unpermissible to do anything else.

Bonehead Bill.

Bill Jones is such a stupid guy he stays at home at night, instead of sporting round with us down town where things are bright. I never saw Bill take a drink. He doesn't care for shows, and the "open-evenings" savings-bank's the only place he goes; for Bill's so all-fired stupid he just can't see the fun of blowing half the envelope before the week's begun. And Bill could stand it pretty well, as caused—well, don't you see, he's so con-founded stupid he draws twice as much as me!—Hugh Kahler, in the Wells Fargo Messenger.

WESTERN MINING AND OIL NEWS

Western Newspaper Union News Service.

Metal Market Values.

Lead, New York, \$7.37½.
Bar silver, 65½c.
Spelter, St. Louis, \$19.15.
Copper, casting, \$27.12½.
Boulder, Colo.—Tungsten, per unit of 60 per cent, \$76; 25 per cent, \$46.20; 10 per cent, \$31.

Colorado.

Leadville mines are very active as a result of the high price prevailing for silver.

Boulder is in the throes of a mining boom that has eclipsed anything in its history.

The Western Zinc Oxide Company has completed plans for enlarging the plant at Leadville.

Reports reached Leadville stating that tungsten had been discovered in the Gold Park section near Red Cliff.

Leadville lessees have started work on the old Brain Boru property located on the north side of Iowa gulch.

Ore, practically solid gold, from a streak of good size, is reported being taken from the Snow Bound lode at Gold Hill.

The discovery of a body of tungsten ore in the little Dora mine adjoining the townsite of Silverton has led to increased activity in that vicinity.

Lessees on the Adelaide and Humboldt properties in Adelaide park, Leadville district, are shipping a large tonnage of iron sulphide carrying extensive high percentage of sulphur.

John F. Cass of Denver, owner of twelve claims near Spruce on the Moffat road west of Tolland, says that he has opened tungsten ore which runs 82 per cent tungsten. At the current price this ore is worth \$22,000 per ton.

George Cramer has greatly expanded his zone of activity on Carbonate hill by securing leases on the Yankee Doodle, Aetna, and other claims in the Leadville district. The immense bodies of iron and manganese ores which he has developed in Star No. 5 property for several years have been followed into adjoining claims.

The Harrod oil interests of Pittsburg and Des Moines have joined with Grove people and leased 2,000 acres of land near town to prospect for oil. Ten thousand dollars has been advanced for the preliminary expense and several drills are expected to be at work soon. The land leased is identical in appearance to that in the valuable Salt Creek district of Wyoming.

New Mexico.

The Artec mine at Baldy is to be developed.

Five car loads of copper ore were shipped from Scholle to the El Paso smelter.

Manganese ore in a large body has been struck by John J. Hyatt at his ranch near Cooke.

The Farmington Meadows oil field in San Juan county will be developed commencing May 15.

The big 1,800-ton concentrator at Tyrone, representing an expenditure of over \$1,000,000 is now in active operation.

A deposit of magnesite, running from 90 per cent to practically pure magnesite, has been found near Las Cruces.

A coal deposit, part of it a surface vein 3½ feet in width, has been located about eighteen miles northwest of Magdalena.

Wyoming.

A force of men have been unloading a steam engine at No. 4 mine at Rock Springs. The company intends to push work in this mine employing about 150 men and producing 1,000 tons of coal a day.

J. H. Gardner of Crystal Springs is enthusiastic over the prospect of the Occidental Mining Company on Sand creek. Assays have reached nearly \$3,000 per ton, declared Gardner, and extensive machinery is being installed.

Just now the only real producers in the Lander fields are the Dallas fields whose oil is handled by the Wyopo Company and sold locally, and the Hudson Oil Company which is shipping three cars of crude a day to Casper refineries.

Since the organization of the Alkali Butte Oil Company and the transfer to it of the lands held by Oliver and his associates there has been a small sized rush to that vicinity. This is an old field, thirty miles east of Lander, which has never been developed to any extent.

Arizona.

Jerome, the center of copper mining activity in Yavapai county, is one of the busiest camps in the United States.

Gold values running as high as \$100 a ton have been uncovered on the claims of Thomas English, six miles north of Price.

Russel and Harrington who are working the Highland mining claim at Globe under lease, are shipping over 250 tons of 8 per cent copper ore per month.

Look and Feel Clean, Sweet and Fresh Every Day

Drink a glass of real hot water before breakfast to wash out poisons.

Life is not merely to live, but to live well, eat well, digest well, work well, sleep well, look well. What a glorious condition to attain, and yet how very easy it is if one will only adopt the morning inside bath.

Folks who are accustomed to feel dull and heavy when they arise, splitting headache, stuffy from a cold, foul tongue, nasty breath, acid stomach, can, instead, feel as fresh as a daisy by opening the sluices of the system each morning and flushing out the whole of the internal poisonous stagnant matter.

Everyone, whether ailing, sick or well, should, each morning, before breakfast, drink a glass of real hot water with a teaspoonful of limestone phosphate in it to wash from the stomach, liver, kidneys and bowels the previous day's indigestible waste, sour bile and poisonous toxins; thus cleansing, sweetening and purifying the entire alimentary tract before putting more food into the stomach. The action of hot water and limestone phosphate on an empty stomach is wonderfully invigorating. It cleans out all the sour fermentations, gases, waste and acidity and gives one a splendid appetite for breakfast. While you are enjoying your breakfast the water and phosphate is quietly extracting a large volume of water from the blood and getting ready for a thorough flushing of all the inside organs.

The millions of people who are bothered with constipation, bilious spells, stomach trouble, rheumatism; others who have sallow skins, blood disorders and sickly complexions are urged to get a quarter pound of limestone phosphate from any store that handles drugs which will cost very little, but is sufficient to make anyone a pronounced crank on the subject of internal sanitation.—Adv.

Forethought.

"You seem to be rather busy."

"Yes, I'm writing a love letter. It's been working on it for more than an hour."

"Why take such pains?"

"I want to feel sure that if this letter is ever read in court it won't make me look like a fool."

Sorry He Did It.

It was with considerable trepidation that we approached the shade of Sir Francis Bacon, whom we had crossed the Styx to interview.

"Is it true," we asked, "that you wrote the plays usually attributed to Shakespeare?"

"Yes," he replied, sadly. "It's true enough, but since I've seen some of the Broadway productions of my stuff I'm not bragging about it."

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